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The Tearing of Garments as a Symbol of Mourning, with especial reference to the Customs of the Ancient Hebrews.—By MORRIS JASTROW, JR., Professor in the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

IN a paper prepared for the meeting of the Section for the Historical Study of Religions in 1898, and now published in No. 1 of the papers of that section,¹ I discussed the significance of the custom of placing dust on the head as a symbol of mourning or sign of grief among the ancient Hebrews and other peoples. Incidentally, another custom no less prominent was touched upon, namely, the tearing of garments. This custom merits an independent investigation. As in the former paper, I will confine myself largely to the customs of the ancient Hebrews, though the results of the investigation apply to other nations among whom the custom exists.

The tearing of garments and the putting on of sackcloth are so frequently mentioned together in the Old Testament as to make it evident that the two rites are closely connected with one another. It is sufficient for our purposes to refer to such passages as the following: (1) Gen. xxxvii. 34, where Jacob, upon learning that Joseph is dead, tears his garments and places sackcloth around his loins. (2) 1 Kings xxi. 27, where Ahab, after listening to the denunciation and gloomy prophecy of Elijah, tears his garments as a sign of grief and puts sackcloth on his body (בְּשָׂרוֹ). (3) Esther iv. 1, where Mordecai, in grief at the evil fate in store for the Jews, tears his garments and clothes himself in sackcloth and ashes. (4) 2 Sam. iii. 31, where on the occasion of Abner's death David says to Joab and to all the people, "Tear your garments and gird yourselves with sackcloth." (5) 2 Kings vi. 30, Joram the son of Ahab tears his garments and appears before the people with sackcloth on his body underneath (עַל-בְּשָׂרוֹ מִבֵּית). (6) 2 Kings xix. 1 (parallel passage, Is. xxxvii. 1), Hezekiah in deep distress at the impending advance of Sennacherib against Jerusalem tears his garments and covers

¹ Corresponding to JAOS. xx. 1, pp. 133-150: "Dust, Earth, and Ashes as Symbols of Mourning among the Ancient Hebrews."

himself with sackcloth. It is true that frequently the 'tearing of garments' is mentioned without the 'putting on of sackcloth' (e. g. Ezra ix. 3., Num. xiv. 6), and *vice versa*; and that the 'tearing of garments' is also joined to other symbolical expressions of mourning, grief, or distress, such as fasting (Ezra ix. 5), putting dust on the head (2 Samuel i. 2), plucking the hair or beard (Ezra ix. 3), and the like. Still, the fact that in so many passages the two customs under consideration are united is significant, as is also the circumstance that when thus combined, the tearing is invariably mentioned first. The one act appears to be preparatory to the other.

The verb employed for indicating this tearing is קרע, and an examination of its use shows conclusively that a violent action of tearing is denoted by it. 1 Sam. xv. 28, Samuel announces to Saul, קרע יהוה את ממלכות ישראל מעליך; which clearly means, "Yahwe has wrenched from thee the rulership over Israel." Similarly, 2 Kings xvii. 21, בִּי קרע ישראל מעל בית דוד; "For he has torn Israel away from the house of David," i. e., has torn asunder the bond uniting the two. One may also consult 1 Kings xi. 11, 1 Sam. xxviii. 17, and more particularly 2 Kings ii. 12, where it is said of Elisha, upon seeing the ascension of Elijah, וַיִּחַזַק בְּבִגְדָיו וַיִּקְרַעם לִשְׁנַיִם קרעים; "He took hold of his garments and tore them in two (lit. in two tears)." The verb קרע, therefore, in connection with the 'tearing' of the garments implies more than making a mere rent in one's clothes, and may be used to indicate tearing them off one's body—a violent removal. If this be so, we should expect to find evidence that it was once customary as a symbol of mourning to strip oneself of one's garments entirely. Such evidence is indeed forthcoming, and Schwally¹ has already called attention to it, though he has failed to give a satisfactory explanation of the custom. In the first chapter of Micah, the prophet pictures the coming annihilation of the northern kingdom, which arouses in him a profound sense of grief:

"Therefore I will lament and howl,
Go about barefooted and naked,
Start a lament like the jackals,
A mourning like ostriches" (v. 8).

¹ *Das Leben nach dem Tode nach den Vorstellungen des alten Israel*, pp. 13-14.

The terms used—מספר, אֵילִיָּה, אֶסְפָּרָה—are the ones commonly employed for indicating the lament for the dead, and the reference to going about ‘barefooted’¹ and ‘naked’ would therefore be out of place, if the custom of stripping oneself did not at one time exist. Is. xx. 2-4 may be quoted as confirmatory evidence. The prophet is ordered, by way of furnishing an external symbol of his grief at impending misfortune, to remove the simple sackcloth which covers his loins, to take off the sandals from his feet, and go about “naked and barefooted.”

There are indications that among the ancient Arabs likewise the custom prevailed of stripping oneself as a sign of mourning and distress. In the *Kitab al-Aghani*, there is a story of a woman who in her grief removes her clothing; of a certain Musab b. al-Zubair it is related that he followed a corpse, stripped of his lower garments; and a woman who warns her people of some impending disaster takes off her garments and cries out, “I am the naked warner.”² The Hebrew custom may therefore be regarded as the survival of an observance common to at least several branches of the Semites. Naturally a custom of this kind could not have prevailed as a general one after an era of refinement had set in, though it may still have been resorted to on extraordinary occasions. Even though it be assumed that an Isaiah did not go about *entirely* naked, the main point involved, which is the use of a term indicating the removal of one’s clothes, is not affected by this consideration. The figure would lose its force if it did not correspond to what at one time was a reality.

The substitution of the sackcloth in place of the ordinary garments represents the concession made to the ancient custom of stripping oneself, by an age which, through its refinement, gradually came to look upon nakedness as a synonym for disgrace and dishonor. Viewed in this light, the frequent juxtaposition in the O. T. of the tearing, or rather tearing off, of the garments and the girding on of sackcloth becomes intelligible. Scholars are now generally agreed that the *sag* was originally a loin-cloth³ made of

¹ The custom of going about barefooted in times of grief appears to have survived to a late date, as is shown by Ezekiel xxiv. 17. See also 2 Sam. xv. 30.

² All these examples are furnished by Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidenthums*, p. 107.

³ See the passages quoted by Schwally, *ib.* p. 11.

coarse stuff and hanging down from the loins to cover these parts of the body which in the eyes of the Semites constitute one's 'nakedness' *par excellence*. If we may be permitted to draw a conclusion from the customs prevailing among people living in a primitive state of culture, it is precisely such a loin-cloth which constitutes the simplest kind of dress, the one most naturally resorted to, and therefore presumably coeval with the beginning of dress in general, viewed as an adornment and not as a mere protection against physical discomfort. The Biblical tradition preserves the recollection of these simple beginnings of dress, for the חֲגוּרָה mentioned Gen. iii. 7 and commonly rendered "aprons" are in reality garments hung around the loins.¹ There seems to be no reason to doubt that the dress of the Mohammedan pilgrim known as *ihram*,² which he substitutes for his ordinary clothes upon approaching the sacred precinct of Mecca, is but a modification of the *saq*, consisting as it does of a piece of cloth which is wrapped around the loins and hangs down from the knees, and to which another sheet thrown over the back is attached. This modification represents a further concession demanded by the spread of more refined customs, while the express stipulation that one shoulder and arm must be bare is an indication that the original purpose of the upper garment was not to serve as a covering for the whole body. In this second stage, then, the custom of the mourners was to divest themselves of their ordinary clothes consisting of an upper and lower garment, and, discarding the upper covering entirely, to gird themselves with a cloth hanging down from the loins. In the combination of the tearing of garments with the putting on of sackcloth, the former act represents the preparation for the latter, and the essential feature of the observance is the return at a time of grief and distress to the fashions prevailing in more primitive days.

Among the Babylonians also we have traces of the existence of this custom. In my article "Earth, Dust, and Ashes as Symbols of Mourning"³ I have called attention to the scene depicted in one of the sections of the famous "Stele of Vultures" where

¹ In the days of Niebuhr (*Beschreibung von Arabien*, Kopenhagen, 1772, p. 64) still the dress of some Arab clans.

² I. e., sacred dress. Burton, *Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina*, vol. 2, chap. xii. (p. 279 of Tauchnitz's edition).

³ *L. c.*, p. 142.

attendants occupied in burying the dead are stripped bare to the waist and have a cloth around the loins which hangs down to the knees. The scene enables us to proceed further in the explanation of the mourning garb. Whether the attendants are relatives or priests or merely servants is of little moment as compared with the fact, now admitted by most scholars, that they are actually engaged in the burial of the dead, or at all events in some act connected with the burial. The mourning garb is originally the costume prescribed for those who are concerned with the disposal of the dead ; and since, as the Old Testament and other ancient sources show, it is ordinarily the immediate relatives ¹ who conduct the preparations for the funeral, the funeral garb is naturally identical with the mourning costume. In the article referred to, I have similarly explained the custom of placing earth or dust on the head, as a sign of mourning due to a ceremony, originally connected with the act of earth burial, which involved the building of a mound over the spot where the dead was deposited, the earth for this purpose being carried in a basket and the basket itself placed on the head, where burdens are commonly carried, both in the ancient and the modern Orient.

Coming back to our subject, the question still remains to be answered as to the reason for the original custom of stripping oneself as a sign of mourning, and for the modification of this custom which represents the return to a primitive form of dress. Schwally ² has properly protested against the method which seeks the explanation of popular customs, such as the one under consideration, in psychological motives. Weeping is a natural expression of emotion, and among people unaccustomed to any restraint of their feelings we can understand that a tendency should exist to tear out the hair under the influence of extreme grief ; but the removal of the clothes or the putting of dust on the head are clearly symbolical acts, and must be accounted for in some other way than as a manifestation of humility or as a natural expression of grief. I venture to suggest that the tearing off of the clothes, as well as the return to a simpler form of dress, is an illustration of the fact well known to students of the history of religions, that in religious rites there is in general a marked inclination to return to primitive fashions and earlier

¹ So to this day in the Orient.

² *Das Leben nach dem Tode*, p. 10.

modes of life ; to re-adopt, as it were, the ways and manners of by-gone days. Religious customs are apt to be a stage or several stages behind the customs of every-day life, and this fact holds good for dress as for other things. Let me adduce a few illustrations. Reference has already been made to the custom of the Mohammedan pilgrim, who on approaching Mecca removes his sandals and ordinary garb in order to put on garments that are clearly survivals of earlier fashions in dress.¹ Sandals represent a comparatively advanced fashion in the Orient, and hence when one enters a sacred place, a spot sanctified by religious associations, he returns to the simpler habits of his ancestors and goes about barefooted. To this day the Mohammedan leaves his sandals at the door of the Mosque before entering it. The command given to Moses to take off his sandals upon approaching the burning bush—sacred because of the presence of Yahwe in the fire (Ex. iii. 5 ; see also Joshua v. 15)—belongs to the same category of ideas. According to a tradition the correctness of which there is no reason to question, the priests in the temple at Jerusalem, and presumably therefore in the older local sanctuaries of Palestine, performed their service barefooted.² If this view be correct, we should expect that at an age when the common dress consisted of only a single garment thrown around the loins—according to Niebuhr still the custom among certain Arab clans—in the performance of religious rites this garment would be removed. There is actually a tradition current among the Arabs that it was customary at one time to perform the circuits around the Kaaba completely stripped. Wellhausen³ mentions the tradition. Besides Sura vii. 29, to which he refers, there is an important reference to it in Bokhari's collection of traditions⁴ which has been overlooked. On the occasion of Mohammed's last visit to the Kaaba, he expressly forbade that any one should "make the circuit of the holy house naked." The prohibition would have no

¹ Burton (*l. c.*, II. p. 279) commenting on the antiquity of this dress, known technically as the *izâr*, mentions that it is still the common dress of the people in regions lying to the west of the Red Sea.

² To this day in orthodox synagogues, those members of the congregation who, as supposed descendants of Aaron, have the privilege of blessing the worshippers, remove their shoes before stepping in front of the ark which contains the scrolls of the law.

³ *Reste arabischen Heidenthums*, p. 106.

⁴ Ed. Krehl, I. p. 105.

meaning had the custom not been common in his days. Moreover, the explanation which Wellhausen offers for the curious custom, as though it were due to refusal or inability on the part of the pilgrims to hire suitable clothes from the Koreish, under whose tutelage the Kaaba stood, seems to me to miss the point completely. Robertson Smith¹ follows Wellhausen in making the appearance of the worshipper in a sanctuary without clothes an alternative to appearing in a special garb, borrowed from the priest, as was the case in the sanctuary of al-Jalsad, or obtained in some other way. According to this point of view, the question of *taboo* is primarily involved. The ordinary clothes would become unfit for further use, by contact with holy objects; hence other clothes must be provided. In connection with the subject, Robertson Smith brings forward the numerous allusions in the Old Testament and in Arabic literature, as well as examples from other nations than Semites, in which a change of garments is prescribed as an essential condition before approaching the presence of a deity.

It seems to me, however, that the two customs, the appearance at a sanctuary without clothes, and the appearance in different clothes, must be kept apart. At all events, it is inconceivable that at a time when, from whatever motives, religious practices prescribed a *change* of garments upon approaching a deity, the custom of appearing naked should have arisen as an alternative. 'Nakedness' is not looked upon with favor, as a general thing, by the Semites. The ideas associated with it in Semitic diction are 'shame' and 'disgrace,' and such conceptions of nakedness appear to be quite as ancient as the ordinance to change the clothes before coming to a sacred spot. If, therefore, we find the custom of appearing naked before a deity vouched for, it must have been due to other factors entering into play; and I believe that the tendency, above noted, to return to by-gone fashions in the case of religious observances constitutes one of these factors, and indeed the main factor. I would place the custom of appearing naked before a deity in the same category with that of appearing barefooted in a holy place. Through my colleague, Prof. Lambertson, of the University of Pennsylvania, my attention was directed to the passage in the Iliad, xvi. 234-235, from which it appears that among the Greeks, primitive customs were retained

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, p. 432 (1st ed.).

in connection with religious rites. The Dodonean priests went barefooted, and slept on the ground. They carried their retention of primitive habits to the extent of not even washing their feet. Leaf, in his note on the passage,¹ properly explains the retention of such customs as due to the phenomenon of religious conservatism, and instances as a parallel the use of stone knives in sacrifice² long after they had gone out of use for the needs of ordinary life. The same observation may be made in the case of the priests of Egypt, who in the days of the Middle Empire retain a skirt of a very ancient pattern; and Erman expressly notes³ that this conservative trait in the matter of dress is even more noticeable when we reach the period of the New Empire, the priests of which wear a costume that dates back to the 4th dynasty. The mantle or double dress is never assumed by them. The long, wide skirt which is the common fashion in the Middle Empire survives among the priests of the New Empire, while during the Middle Empire the priests are again distinguished by the fashion of the narrow, short skirt which belongs to the Old Empire. They thus always lagged behind the fashions of the day. At funeral services, the conservative principle is even more pronounced, for the officiating priest wears the panther skin, which takes us back to the most primitive and rudest style of dress.

Carrying this principle to its logical issue, we reach the thesis for which I enter a plea, that there exists a general tendency in religious observances to revert to (or as we might also put it, to retain) the ways and manners of an earlier age. That in the process some customs involving a return to earlier fashions should have survived without change, while in others modifications were introduced, is perfectly natural. Such a custom as the requirement to appear barefooted might be retained to a late date because it was compatible with even advanced ideas of refinement. Its observance did not involve uncovering that portion of the body which was more particularly regarded as a person's 'nakedness,' and only when in addition to the shoe or sandal a special covering for the leg and foot became customary, might a compromise

¹ *The Iliad*, vol. ii. p. 143.

² So also in the rite of circumcision, in the performance of which the flint blade is still used in Egypt.

³ Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (Engl. transl., London, 1894), pp. 296-297.

be effected which permitted the retention of the stocking.¹ On the other hand, the custom of stripping oneself at a time of grief would soon yield to compromises suggested by the growing sense of decency, and would only be resorted to on extraordinary occasions. The first step in this compromise would be to gird on a loin-cloth. From the passage Is. xx. 2-4 it appears that the prophet's ordinary clothes consisted merely of a loin-cloth and sandals, and from other testimony we know that the dress of the seers was of a much simpler character than that worn by other persons. The Mohammedan *ihrām* represents another form of this compromise. From this point of view there is no *specific* mourning garb, there is merely the general tendency when engaged in any religious observance—prayer, pilgrimage, expiatory rites, or occupation with the dead—to return to more primitive fashions in dress, in accord with the general conservative character inherent in matters connected with religion. In the chapter of Bokhari's collection of traditions already referred to, the question as to the kind of dress which is proper for prayer is fully discussed.² Mohammed himself did not prescribe any special dress; but in view of the changes in fashions which had been introduced in the course of time, and the variety of fashions prevailing in the Islamic world, it is significant that in this discussion great stress is laid upon wearing only *one* garment during the devotions; in evident contrast to the ordinary costume, which consisted of two garments. Various traditions likewise voice a protest against wearing ornamented clothes during prayer, the objection being urged that they distract the attention of the worshipper from his prayers. It is hardly necessary to point out, however, that this cannot be the real reason for the objection. The whole course of the discussion shows that the chief point involved is the contrast between by-gone and present fashions in dress; and the question raised throughout is, whether in prayer present fashions in dress are permissible. The general tendency is to decide the question in favor of the simpler costumes of former days, as more appropriate for wear during one's devotions. In Mohammed's day, upper garments in addition to lower

¹ So in orthodox synagogues at the present time, the descendants of the priests when blessing the congregation only remove their shoes (see note above, p. 28).

² Ed. Krehl, i. pp. 104-107.

ones were already common; but a tradition is recorded that when engaged in prayer, the prophet bared his arms and threw his cloak over his shoulders.¹ There appears indeed to have been a doubt in the minds of some whether it was proper to keep the sandals on during prayer, and a tradition is introduced to settle the question, which declares that the prophet was in the habit of praying with his sandals on his feet.² However these and other questions were settled, the mere fact that they were raised illustrates the general disposition to revert to simpler fashions of dress, or at least to imitate such fashions, when engaged in religious observances. With the introduction of more elaborate fashions, the aversion to uncovering any considerable part of the body would become more pronounced; and this feeling, too, is foreshadowed in Bokhari's chapter on prayer, where some of the traditions maintain that the garment should cover the whole body. By a further extension of this process, we reach the stage in which the essential feature of dress on religious occasions is its general differentiation from the costume of everyday life, rather than a return to any particular fashion. Customs, as is well known, not only survive but undergo modifications long after their original purport has been forgotten; and so in the course of time a form of dress might be prescribed for sacred occasions which would contradict the basic principle of a return to simpler fashions. We do not meet with this stage in Islam, but a noteworthy instance of such a development is the dress prescribed for the priests in the Old Testament, which while preserving perhaps some features of earlier fashions, is on the whole certainly more elaborate than the garments worn in ordinary life. Again, the still more elaborate costumes prescribed for the priests and ecclesiastical dignitaries in the Roman Catholic church may be regarded as illustrating the extent to which the process may be carried by the introduction of new factors. The passages adduced by Robertson Smith³ from the Old Testament and elsewhere are therefore interesting as showing how early the thought that it was essential to appear before a deity in a different garb from that worn in everyday life took a firm hold and tended gradually to set aside the earlier

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

² For all that, the custom prevails at present to remove the sandals before entering a mosque.

³ *Op. cit.*

principle that the religious dress was to be marked by its conservative character. But this circumstance does not justify us in placing 'no clothes' and 'different clothes' side by side as though they were alternatives. If Robertson Smith is correct in supposing the direction to change the clothes before coming to a sacred spot to be due to prevailing notions of taboo, then we must seek for a different order of ideas as the basis of the command to appear naked. As has already been remarked, it is difficult to conceive how two such different customs could have arisen at the same time. The custom of appearing naked in the religious ceremonial impresses one as more archaic than the other. As a 'survival' we can account for its being resorted to occasionally even after the custom of changing the clothes, for reasons of taboo or for any other cause, was in vogue; but this supposition implies—and upon this alone stress is laid here—that the two customs are entirely independent of one another, being produced through two different orders of ideas; or, if this seems to be going too far, we may at least say that the custom of changing the clothes grew out of the earlier one through the introduction of new factors. A support for this view is to be found again in Babylonian monuments belonging to the oldest period, on which worshippers are depicted in a naked state;¹ while the second stage, in which the worshipper has recourse to a simple loin-cloth and divests himself of his ordinary clothes, is also represented, as has already been pointed out.²

This return to simpler and more primitive fashions may be observed in other funeral and mourning rites of the Semites. Among Arabs and Hebrews in the days of mourning, the couch on which the mourner ordinarily sits and sleeps is forsaken, and he crouches on the floor; a return to the period when couches did not yet form a staple article of furniture. The association of ideas of humility with the custom belongs to a later age which in a self-conscious spirit sought for an interpretation of traditional observances, the real purport of which was no longer understood. Similarly, the removing of all ornaments from the hair and body, and the general neglect of the person, in days of mourning, vouched for in the case of the ancient Hebrews by various passages in the Old Testament, and still observed among the modern

¹ See Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 666.

² See above, p. 26 f.

Egyptians and elsewhere in the Orient, is due in the first instance not to any inherent aversion to display in days of distress, but to this same tendency to re-adopt the simpler forms of life that belong to a past age. Precisely the same instructions—not to bathe, nor to adorn himself—are prescribed for the Mohammedan pilgrim during the time that he is engaged in performing his religious duties at the Kaaba and the surrounding sacred places. It can hardly be argued that the pilgrimage is a ceremony of expiation, and that for this reason regulations of abstinence are prescribed, for there is no trace of any such idea connected with it in any of the Arabic writers. If however we consider that the visit to the Kaaba (like the visiting of sacred places in general) is an exceedingly old rite antedating the period of elaborate dress and adornment of the person, observed in an age which did not yet enjoy the luxury or feel the necessity of personal cleanliness, or of living in agreeable and comfortable surroundings, we can recognize here the tendency of the participant in a religious rite to transport himself back to the earlier age, and make every effort in his power to observe the ceremonies under the same conditions and in the same way as his remote ancestors.

My contention then is, that the tearing off of the clothing is not primarily a funeral or mourning custom specifically, but a ceremony observed in connection with religious rites in general, prompted by the general tendency to preserve in such ceremonies the fashions of primitive days. At a time when the ordinary garment consisted of a simple cloth thrown around the loins, the participant in the rite removed this cloth and returned to a state of nature, upon entering the presence of a deity or on approaching a sacred spot, or in burying the dead. Later, when the ordinary dress consisted of two or more garments, he returned on the occasion of performing a religious act—be it a pilgrimage, a burial, or what not—to more primitive fashions, by throwing off the upper garment and going about in the simple loin-cloth; or, in a more advanced stage of refinement, by baring merely a portion of the body—arms, shoulders and feet. The custom of priests among various ancient nations to go about barefooted belongs to this category, as does the retention of sandals among certain Catholic orders in these days when the shoe represents the common covering for the foot.

Since from this point of view the stripping off of the garments or the girding on of the loin cloth was not originally a specific

mourning custom, but became so merely from the fact that the funeral rites necessarily had a religious character, we can understand that there were other occasions among the Hebrews besides the death of a relative when the custom was resorted to. Attention has been called to the fact that the Hebrew seers at one time went about naked. The example of Saul¹ shows that 'stripping off the garments' was an act preliminary to 'prophesying,' and hence even at a later age the prophet's garb is characterized as more primitive than the ordinary fashions of the day. It is clearly because 'prophecy' is a religious act that 'nakedness' is associated with it.

From such an application of the custom must be disassociated the girding of sackcloth around the loins as a genuine symbol of humility and submission; as e. g., when the servants of Ben-Hadad come to appeal for mercy to King Ahab, they are depicted with sackcloth around their loins and ropes on their heads (1 Kings xx. 31). Such an act is at the other end of the chain, directly dependent upon the use of sackcloth as a symbol of mourning, and contemporaneous with the period when the custom of tearing off the garments had become specifically associated with mourning for a lost relative. The garb of mourning naturally becomes also the symbol of distress in general, and distress is of necessity involved in a display of submission or in an appeal for mercy. Hence also the messenger who brings the news of death or of some other calamity, or the one who announces an impending misfortune, tears his garments and girds himself with the loin-cloth; and similarly persons in distress strip off their garments (Num. xiv. 6; 2 Kings v. 8) or tear their tunics, and have recourse to that other mourning symbol, the placing of earth or dust on the head (1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2, xv. 32); or they appear with their beards disfigured, with torn garments, and with incisions in their bodies (Jer. xli. 5). We can also understand how, in the course of further development, the feeling of indignation should come to be manifested by similar acts.²

In all these instances we are obliged to assume that the tearing off of the clothes and the putting on of sackcloth were

¹ 1 Sam. xix. 24, "And he stripped off his clothes, and prophesied before Samuel, and he lay naked all that day and all that night," &c.

² See my article, "Earth, Dust and Ashes," &c., p. 147.

old established customs, which had come to be specifically regarded as symbols of mourning, and then were still further extended to other occasions. Be it emphasized once more that popular customs persist in their vigor long after their original purport is forgotten. Becoming merely or specifically symbols of mourning, it is easy to see how the tearing off of the garments should become disassociated from the act to which it was once preliminary—the girding on of the sackcloth—and that both should continue to exist independent of each other. It seems necessary, however, to assume certain intermediate stages before this separation of the two customs was brought about. The tearing off of the garments was gradually transformed into a mere tearing of the garments; and the sackcloth, instead of constituting the *only* article of clothing worn in days of mourning or on occasions of distress, became a supplementary garment worn either underneath the ordinary clothes or even over them. The Jews in Persia still tear off their upper garment in the time of mourning and bare themselves to the waist; but elsewhere in the Orient it was the custom, as early as the days of Jesus, merely to tear off a piece of the garment, and this custom was still further modified until a mere rent in a seam was regarded as answering all requirements. With this transformation of the ‘tearing off’ into the mere ‘tearing,’ the way was prepared for the complete separation of the tearing of the garments from the putting on of the loin-cloth; and that this separation was already brought about in pre-exilic days follows from the passages to which direct or indirect reference has been made, in which the one custom is recorded without reference to the other. A curious result of this separation is the prominence which the tearing or tearing off of the garments—originally subsidiary and merely the preliminary act—acquires as against the girding on of the loin-cloth. While the latter continues in force as a symbol of mourning and then of distress, grief and humility in general, the tearing of garments in combination with other symbols of mourning or grief is far more frequently introduced. In post-Biblical literature we hear but little of the putting of sackcloth around the loins, whereas the tearing of garments continues in force and survives at the present day among orthodox Jews (in both Orient and Occident) in the conventional rent made in the coat on the occasion of the death of a relative.

It has already been pointed out that appearing in different clothes on occasions of a religious character belongs to a different category of ideas from the tearing off of the garments with the various modifications which this custom has undergone; and while it lies beyond the province of this paper to investigate further what relation, if any, exists between the two customs, it is not impossible that the growth of refinement and the advance of the æsthetic sense should have tended toward the substitution of the change of the clothes for the mutilation of them, as a more appropriate means of manifesting grief. Of course such a substitution could not have taken place until the time when the conscious return to more primitive fashions in days of mourning no longer played any part. On the other hand, foreign influences may also have been at work in bringing about the custom of having a special mourning garb. Among the Chinese, as is well known, the colors appropriate for mourning are white, brown and yellow, and the putting on of the mourning garb is an elaborate ceremony undertaken on the seventh day after the death of a near relative.¹ The sons of a deceased father put on garments made of hemp of the natural color, which are worn over the ordinary clothes; the grandsons are distinguished by hemp cloth of a yellowish tinge. No red garments or silks or satins are permitted for three years. With the custom of special garments for the mourners are also connected observances emphasizing the same principle of a return to by-gone fashions. So for 49 or 60 days the mourners do not sleep in beds nor sit on chairs. The hempen garments of the natural color and the yellow garments are exchanged at certain intervals or on stated occasions for white cotton clothes and brown sackcloth, again placed over the ordinary garments.¹ Among the Greeks, we find special garments prescribed for the priests; the long chiton, white or purple, the latter being set aside for occasions when the gods of the nether world were invoked, while again other garments were prescribed for festivals.² For the people in general dark clothes were prescribed in post-Homeric times as appropriate in days of mourn-

¹ For further details see Doolittle, *Social Life among the Chinese*, Vol. i., p. 183 f.

² Stengel und Oehmichen, *Griechische Sakralalterthümer*, p. 33.

ing¹; and while no great stress appears to have been laid upon the observance, it is from the Greeks, as would appear, that the present Occidental custom of wearing dark (and then black) clothes as a sign of mourning was derived.² The Book of Judith (viii. 5, τὰ ἱμάτια τῆς χηρείας) furnishes the evidence that in the second century B. C. it was customary for widows in Palestine to wear a special mourning dress for the space of several years, while beneath this they continued to wear the loin-cloth. This combination of the earlier with what is clearly a later fashion is a curious illustration of the compromise between religious conservatism and the fashion plate. To both influences women have been at all times more subject than men, and since we do not find at any time a special mourning dress prescribed for men among the Hebrews, there are strong reasons for suspecting foreign influence as at least one factor in accounting for the introduction of the 'widow's weeds' in Palestine. The character of Judith, in the book of that name, is modelled in part upon that of Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah, as depicted in Genesis, chap. xxxviii;³ and since the story in Genesis in its present form is at least some centuries earlier than the Book of Judith, the reference to "garments of widowhood" in Gen. xxxviii. 14 obliges us to carry back the custom to a still earlier period. Still, even this does not preclude foreign influence. The close contact existing among the various nations of antiquity through commercial and political intercourse from at least the period of Persian supremacy rendered the Hebrews in post-exilic days peculiarly subject to the attraction of fashions prevailing outside of Palestine; and so far as the Arabs are concerned, their ancient customs underwent profound modifications and transformations long before the advent of Mohammed.

¹ Busolt, Bauer, und Müller, *Griechische Staats- Kriegs- und Privat-alterthümer*, p. 423. Ashes, too, were smeared over the clothes (*ib.*, 462^a).

² Dark blue clothes are already mentioned in the Iliad (xxiv., 94) for occasions of mourning; in the Persian period, all relatives of the deceased wear dark clothes. Busolt, *ib.*, 463b.)

³ Both Judith and Tamar are widows. Tamar is a 'J•huth' by virtue of her relationship to Judah. Like Judith (x. 3, 4), Tamar removes her garments of widowhood (בְּגָדֵי אֶלְמְנוּתָהּ; cf. Judith viii. 5) and ornaments her person (Gen. xxxviii. 14). She offers herself to Judah (vs. 15); Judith offers herself to Holophernes (xii. 16-18.)

As a result of this investigation, I venture to claim that the custom of removing the ordinary clothing and returning to the simpler fashions of by-gone days is the specifically Hebrew mourning custom, to be accounted for by the general tendency to maintain old fashions in religious ceremonies. On the other hand, the appearing in different clothes in the days of mourning, so far as it existed among Hebrews and Arabs, is due to the working of different factors, among which the influence of similar customs among various other nations of antiquity is to be taken into consideration. The older and specifically Hebrew (or perhaps general Semitic) custom passes through various phases of development, and leaves its traces in the mourning rites of modern Jews and modern Arabs ; whereas the other custom, the special mourning garb, is only met with sporadically among the Hebrews, and never became general either with Hebrews or Arabs, or, for that matter, with any branch of the ancient Semites so far as is known.

Of course this thesis does not preclude the possibility of a merging of mourning rites drawn from various parts of the world. Indeed, there is a curious parallel in the modern Orient to the Occidental custom of wearing a mourning band around the hat. This custom is now limited to males, and formerly long streamers were attached to the band ; but in Egypt female relatives at a time of mourning bind a strip of linen or cotton stuff or muslin—generally of a blue color—around the head, with the ends hanging down the back.¹ The custom appears to be an old one in Egypt, for in the funeral scenes depicted on the walls of ancient Egyptian tombs we find women with a similar band around the head. Whether the hat- or head-band is a modification of the special mourning dress, is a question into which we cannot enter, nor is there enough material at hand for deciding it ; but the presence of the same custom in the modern Orient and Occident illustrates the readiness with which the mourning customs of one country pass over to another. There is no occasion for surprise, therefore, at finding one and the same people employing two such different methods of symbolizing grief as the mutilating of garments and the providing of special garbs for occasions of mourning ; nor is it surprising even to find both methods combined and resorted to by one and the same individual.

¹ Lane, *Modern Egyptians* (London, 1836), ii. p. 293.